

EXHIBIT F

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MP3 Binaries FAQ - alt.binaries.sounds.mp3.* (05/01/04)

There are reader questions on this topic!
Help others by sharing your knowledge

From: - FAQ-Man - <FAQ-Man@mp3-faq.org>
Newsgroups: alt.binaries.sounds.mp3.d
Subject: MP3 Binaries FAQ - alt.binaries.sounds.mp3.* (05/01/04)
Summary: Guidelines for the alt.binaries.sounds.mp3.* newsgroups
Reply-To: FAQ-Man@mp3-faq.org
Message-ID: <joc890d486u97jvstebkvdmc5t7q0bdiv@4ax.com>
X-No-Archive: yes
X-Complaints-Info: Please be sure to forward a copy of ALL headers otherwise we will be unable to process your complaint properly.
Date: Sat, 01 May 2004 23:31:46 GMT
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(Note: all follow-ups to this post will show up in
alt.binaries.sounds.mp3.d, [the absm.* discussion group] NOT in the group
where you find it posted. If you post a follow-up, go to the discussion
group to see any responses to your post.)

The faq is located at <http://www.mp3-faq.org/> or at
<http://www.faqs.org/faqs/music/mp3/newsgroups-faq/>

: The Official FAQ for alt.binaries.sounds.mp3.*
:-----

The FAQ Quick Review Guide A Quick Reference For Working Within The a.b.s.m.* Newsgroups

Help make these groups better and more useful for everyone.
Follow these easy steps. Thanks!

- 1 - Limit your posts to 75 megabytes per 24 hours.
- 2 - Use a high quality encoder.
- 3 - Make good use of a 0-file and include all pertinent info.
- 4 - Use meaningful subject headers that are not too long. Avoid using more than 80 characters!
- 5 - Check your MP3s before posting them.
- 6 - Test post in test groups.
- 7 - Post from 472500 to 315000 bytes per segment (7500 to 5000 lines uuencoded/segment) for best propagation.
- 8 - Crosspost into the appropriate decade group (if you know it).
- 9 - Don't post binaries in the discussion or request groups and vice versa.
- 10 - Enjoy the music!

- [1] GENERAL INFORMATION -

[1.0]What is an "MP3"?

MP3 is another name for a layer-3 mpeg. It is a sound compression format that can create near CD-quality sound files while maintaining a small file size. For more technical information on the MP3 format see [9.2]

[1.1]What newsgroups does this FAQ apply to?

This FAQ covers the entire alt.binaries.sounds.mp3 hierarchy and includes, but is not restricted to, the following:

alt.binaries.sounds.mp3 - The Binary posting group (also known as the "main" group). This group is for the posting of binary sound files that are in the MP3 format. This group is NOT for the posting of text, requests, or ftp site announcements. The exceptions are: postings of this document, FAQ tips, zero-files (a.k.a. (0/x)), and brief follow-ups as needed to alert posters to problems or to urge them towards these guidelines. Other non-musical exceptions are

cover art/insert scans, and .info files. Players, encoders, and other sound utilities should be posted in the appropriate group:
alt.binaries.sounds.utilities.

alt.binaries.sounds.mp3.d - This is the discussion group for the a.b.s.mp3 hierarchy. This is one of two non-binary groups of the hierarchy. Binaries are strictly forbidden in this group. DO NOT post any binaries in the "d" (discussion) group. This group is for the discussion of MP3s, MP3 technology and other MP3 related topics.

alt.binaries.sounds.mp3.requests - This is the request group of the hierarchy. It is *not* a binaries group and mp3 files should not be posted there. This group is intended to contain only requests and request follow-ups alerting the requestor that their request has been filled.

alt.binaries.sounds.mp3.19xxs - Also known as the decade groups. These are groups that are similar to the main group (a.b.s.mp3) but are ONLY for the posting of sounds from a specific decade as indicated by the group name. The same exceptions for posting of non-binaries apply to decades that apply to main. The groups are:

alt.binaries.sounds.mp3.1950s
alt.binaries.sounds.mp3.1960s
alt.binaries.sounds.mp3.1970s
alt.binaries.sounds.mp3.1980s
alt.binaries.sounds.mp3.1990s
alt.binaries.sounds.mp3.2000s

alt.binaries.sounds.mp3.<music-type> - The "genre" groups. These are groups that have been created to contain a specific type of MP3 posting. You may or may not have access to these groups, but some are being used more and more so they deserve comment here. The names of the groups should be pretty self-explanatory.

alt.binaries.sounds.mp3.beatles
alt.binaries.sounds.mp3.bootlegs
alt.binaries.sounds.mp3.country
alt.binaries.sounds.mp3.jazz
alt.binaries.sounds.mp3.latin
alt.binaries.sounds.mp3.zappa

NOTES: For songs that were recorded before 1950 there exists a group called alt.binaries.sounds.78rpm-era. It is "for the posting of binary files from the beginning of recorded sound to the end of the age of 78 records in the late fifties." Appropriate MP3s are welcome there.

Although the alt.binaries.sounds.country.mp3 group is *not* part of the alt.binaries.sounds.mp3 hierarchy, and therefore not bound by its FAQ or Charter, it is available on a number of news servers and deserves a mention here.

While there *is* a country group available in the a.b.s.m* hierarchy, at the time of this writing it is not as active or readily available as the alt.binaries.sounds.country.mp3 group is.

There are also a large number of other alt.binaries.sounds.mp3.* groups that may or not be available to you on your news server/ISP.

[1.2] Dividing the groups into genres would be a good idea. How come there aren't groups like a.b.s.m.funk, or a.b.s.m.rock-and-roll?

There *are* groups like those. In fact, not only is there a.b.s.m.rock, but there's also a.b.s.m.rock.full-album, a.b.s.m.alternative-rock, a.b.s.m.classic-rock, a.b.s.m.heavy-metal and even a.b.s.m.metal.full-albums.

It seems like every week there is a request that a new MP3 binary group be created for a specific genre of music that would be posted there.

There are a couple of reasons why this *isn't* the great idea that it may appear to be. But despite those reasons and attempts to discourage new mp3 groups, there has been rampant mp3 newsgroup creation.

FALLACY : "If you build it, they will come"

Just because you decide a new mp3 group is needed does NOT mean that anybody will ever use the group. If it is poorly thought out, poorly executed, or redundant, the odds of your group succeeding are slim at best.

There are currently more than SEVENTY-SEVEN groups in the alt.binaries.sounds.mp3.* hierarchy, and over ONE HUNDRED AND THIRTY FOUR mp3 groups on all of Usenet. How many of them do you have access to? How many of them are used for MP3s at all?

A big problem with a number of the 'genre' groups is that they are duplicates of already existing groups. Where should you post Dangerous Toys entire album of Hellacious Acres? Does it go in a.b.s.m.complete_cd, a.b.s.m.complete-cd, a.b.s.m.full_album, alt.binaries.sounds.mp3.rock.full-album or

a.b.s.m.metal.full-albums? And doesn't it also belong in a.b.s.mp3, a.b.s.m.1980s, a.b.s.m.1980s;, a.b.s.m.heavy-metal, a.b.s.m.rock, and a.b.s.m.rock.full-album? That's ELEVEN groups where those mp3s would be on-topic.

Another major problem is that 'genres' of music are subjective and people legitimately disagree on what genre any given song would fall into. One person insists that Vanilla Ice - Ice Ice Baby.mp3 should go in the R & B group while another insists it should go in RAP.

How do you determine the difference between "metal" and "hard rock"? Take a look at Winamp's ID3-Tag genre list, it's a great example of a lot of different ways to describe the same music. One person's "Booty Bass" is another person's "House" is another person's "Hip Hop."

Also, would your new group even get used? There are thousands of binary groups, and a large number of those are nothing more than spam traps. A lot of them aren't even carried by most ISPs. The decade groups (the ones that are even used at all) are *still* unavailable on some news servers. Right now a.b.s.mp3 is the largest newsgroup by volume. Do you think that many news admins want to add *another* MP3 binary group?

The list below is a sample of mp3 groups that already exist, but many are hardly used and most are not widely propagated. This does not mean that your server does not carry them, only that many servers do not.

```
alt.binaries.sounds.mp3.1980s.venice-beach
alt.binaries.sounds.mp3.alternative-rock
alt.binaries.sounds.mp3.black-gospel
alt.binaries.sounds.mp3.bluegrass-and-rockabilly
alt.binaries.sounds.mp3.blues
alt.binaries.sounds.mp3.books
alt.binaries.sounds.mp3.bootlegs
alt.binaries.sounds.mp3.brazilian
alt.binaries.sounds.mp3.brazillian
alt.binaries.sounds.mp3.christian
alt.binaries.sounds.mp3.classic-rock
alt.binaries.sounds.mp3.complete-cd
alt.binaries.sounds.mp3.country
alt.binaries.sounds.mp3.emmylou
alt.binaries.sounds.mp3.full_albums
alt.binaries.sounds.mp3.gothic
alt.binaries.sounds.mp3.gothic-industrial
alt.binaries.sounds.mp3.heavy-metal
alt.binaries.sounds.mp3.indian.bhangra
alt.binaries.sounds.mp3.indian.movies
alt.binaries.sounds.mp3.indian.movies.old
alt.binaries.sounds.mp3.indian.pop
alt.binaries.sounds.mp3.indian.remixes
alt.binaries.sounds.mp3.indian.requests
alt.binaries.sounds.mp3.indie
alt.binaries.sounds.mp3.karaoke
alt.binaries.sounds.mp3.kcuf
alt.binaries.sounds.mp3.latin
alt.binaries.sounds.mp3.m

alt.binaries.sounds.mp3.metal.full-albumsalt.binaries.sounds.mp3.minneapolis
alt.binaries.sounds.mp3.native-african-folk-music
alt.binaries.sounds.mp3.newcleus
alt.binaries.sounds.mp3.ninja
alt.binaries.sounds.mp3.ninja.music
alt.binaries.sounds.mp3.pop
alt.binaries.sounds.mp3.rap-hiphop
alt.binaries.sounds.mp3.rap-hiphop.full-albums
alt.binaries.sounds.mp3.rap-hiphop.mixtapes
alt.binaries.sounds.mp3.reggae
alt.binaries.sounds.mp3.rock.full-album
alt.binaries.sounds.mp3.rock
alt.binaries.sounds.mp3.singing-cowboy
alt.binaries.sounds.mp3.sound-effects
alt.binaries.sounds.mp3.speeches
alt.binaries.sounds.mp3.spoken-word
alt.binaries.sounds.mp3.themes
alt.binaries.sounds.mp3.tramaine-hawkins
alt.binaries.sounds.1940s.mp3
alt.binaries.sounds.1950s.mp3
alt.binaries.sounds.1960s.mp3
alt.binaries.sounds.mp3.1980s
alt.binaries.sounds.mp3.1990s
alt.binaries.sounds.mp3.1970
alt.binaries.sounds.mp3.1980
alt.binaries.sounds.mp3.1990
alt.binaries.sounds.mp3.1970s
alt.binaries.sounds.mp3.1980's
```

(this is not a comprehensive list - it is not updated often)

Most of these groups all have very low mp3 traffic and some may not have *ever* had any mp3s posted to them at all. And even if you subscribe to a standalone news server that *does* carry these groups, posting to most of them is pointless because they are carried by so few servers.

You should also keep in mind that there are many forms of audio compression currently available that are similar to MP3. If you create an exclusively MP3-based group, then posts of MP4s, AAC, VQF or RA files are off-topic. Getting more and more specific with newsgroup creation is not always a good idea.

All in all, while creating the new group of your choice (so you don't have to search through the main group to find something that *you* like) may seem like a good idea, the odds of it truly being successful on it's own are probably pretty small. In fact, it's likely that it already has been created and just isn't widely propagated or used.

[1.3]How can I create a new a.b.s.mp3.* newsgroup?

Before you decide to just go ahead and create your group du-jour, you should see if a group already exists that covers what you're looking for. It's very likely that a group already exists that meets your 'needs' and mp3 might not even be in the group's name.

For example, there was no need to create an MP3-specific classical group. The newsgroup alt.binaries.sounds.music.classical is a group that already exists and is properly used for MP3 posting. Another example is alt.binaries.sounds.78rpm-era; it is a group that carries binary sound files of all formats from the beginning of recorded sound to the end of the age of 78 records in the late fifties.

If you are unaware of such a group that would fit your needs and cannot locate one, ask in alt.binaries.sounds.mp3.d for some help.

If you *insist* on creating a new newsgroup, please go about it in the correct manner.

There is a proper way to create an alt.* newsgroup and have it be successful, i.e., be accepted as a valid newsgroup by ISPs and news servers. What you DON'T want to do is to just go create the new group because *you* think it's needed.

If you really feel that there is a need for an additional a.b.s.m.* newsgroup, mention it in alt.binaries.sounds.mp3.d for discussion and PLEASE read the appropriate FAQs. THEN when you take your suggestion to alt.config LISTEN TO WHAT PEOPLE THERE HAVE TO SAY.

Just because people may disagree with your new group suggestion does NOT make those people wrong. You may or may not get a lot of suggestions from the followers of alt.config as to the creation of your new group, but you should not dismiss those suggestions out of hand. The people who follow alt.config probably know much more than you do about the creation of new alt.* newsgroups.

[1.4]What are these groups all about?

They are about the posting of high quality MP3-compressed sound files. If you post here, please keep that in mind.

[1.5]What about the other MP3 groups that I see? Does this FAQ apply to them too?

There are a number of MP3 groups, some of which are unused (except for spam-posting). The above mentioned groups are the primary groups that this FAQ deals with. This does not mean that the information within this FAQ is not relevant and applicable to other groups, only that it is not this FAQ's intent. This FAQ has been voted on and applies to all groups in the alt.binaries.sounds.mp3.* hierarchy.

[1.6]Anything else I should know about this FAQ before I continue on?

There are many software applications and utilities involved in the playing, encoding, decoding, posting, and retrieving of MP3s. This FAQ is not meant to be a primer for the use of your particular software. If it was to take into account every piece of popular software and its inner-workings or tricks, this FAQ would rapidly become bloated and unreadable. So, for the most part, this FAQ does not deal with specific software issues. The exceptions are those that either relate to "frequently asked questions" in the discussion group, or other helpful tips that might not be readily found elsewhere. Look in the Specific Software Sub-FAQs (S.S.Ss) accommodate software issues that relate to the a.b.s.mp3 hierarchy or in the Tips Section for some detailed discussions of commonly-asked questions not covered in the FAQ proper.

With all newsgroups it is a common and recommended practice to "lurk." This means that you follow the newsgroup, watching and learning, before you begin posting. Posting is NOT required. There is no "ratio" or required "trading" in the a.b.s.mp3 newsgroups. Leeching is completely acceptable. If you are new to Usenet, or to binary newsgroups in particular, there are a number of basic FAQs that may help you:

<http://abmefaq.net> <== a MUST read. Basics of Usenet and binary newsgroups. Take a look.

http://www.geocities.com/tick1846/bin_help.htm The Definitive Answer to Downloading and Viewing alt.binaries <== If you have questions about how to get the MP3 files from the newsgroup down to your personal computer, look here for help.

<http://www.faqs.org/faqs/usenet/primer/part1/> A Primer on How to Work With the Usenet Community

<http://www.faqs.org/faqs/usenet/what-is/part1/> What is Usenet?

- [2] REQUESTING MP3s -

[2.0] I heard this really great song on the radio today and I want the MP3. How do I get it?

The most obvious answer is to request it in the alt.binaries.sounds.mp3.requests group and then hope that some kind soul will upload it for you. But before you do that, there are a couple other things you can try.

First of all you should pull headers in the main group and the appropriate decade group. Your song might already be posted. The second thing that you can do is to see if the MP3 is already available elsewhere, like the WWW or an FTP site.

There are a number of MP3 search engines available on the World Wide Web, and as the a.b.s.m.* groups continue to grow, and as more and more people are requesting songs, using these search engines might be a quicker method for you to find the MP3 that you're looking for.

This is especially true if you're looking for a popular song or current hit. It can also be a very frustrating experience as thousands of other people try to access the same download site at the same time.

There are certain songs that are requested all the time in the MP3 groups. These songs are popular, and because of that fact, they are available via the WWW search engines. For Example, the song "Lady In Red" by Chris DeBurgh appears over *one hundred times* on just ONE MP3 search engine, and Fastball's "The Way" garnered over TWO Hundred hits. See Sections [7.0] and [9.6] of this FAQ for more info on finding MP3s on the WWW.

[2.1] I really want a song to get posted in the MP3 groups. How do I request it?

Please post your request (REQ) in alt.binaries.sounds.mp3.requests. Posting Requests in the binary group is particularly frowned upon, and these requests are likely to be ignored. The binary groups (every group EXCEPT the 'd' group and the .requests group) are specifically intended to carry only binary posts (i.e., the MP3s themselves) and not requests. The exception to this is a "zero-file" included with the binary itself, which sometimes will include a request along within it.

A typical request might look like this:

REQ: Song Title [decade] - Artist - Other Info - Thanks

The addition of the [decade] or year of release allows those who use the 'decade' groups to quickly search the .requests group for requests that they might be able to fill. "Other Info" would include a specific album version or other pertinent information. And the "Thanks" is, of course, up to the discretion of the poster. This is just a suggestion, but a standard REQ format would make the reading easier and allow sorting by Subject, which would provide an alphabetical listing of all requested songs.

[2.2] I've come up with about 100 songs that I want. I guess I should post a separate request for each one, right?

Whoa now, wait one second. Nobody likes to see a REQ-Flood filling up the group. It makes you appear greedy and is just generally annoying. And when you're asking for something from somebody, it's best to avoid being greedy and annoying.

[2.3] So how do I get ALL the songs that I want?

Why don't you pick the 5 songs that you particularly want and request those. If/when they get posted, then you can request the next 5, and so on. Don't forget that ripping, encoding and posting songs is a time consuming process, so try not to be too greedy.

Another option is to put your request list in the body of the message. The downside to this is that it's easier to quickly read the subject header. But if you're someone who posts a lot of files for other people, it's likely that people will go through the process of reading your post and will probably try to help you.

[2.4] I want to make sure that people see my requests so I'm going to post them five times each. People will notice me then, right?

People will notice you, but not in a good light. Posting the same message multiple times could be called spamming, and it annoys people. See the note in [2.2] about asking people for something while simultaneously annoying them. The combination is not advantageous to you.

[2.5] I posted my requests and nobody filled them. Why? And what can I do about it?

It's possible that nobody has the songs you're requesting. It's also possible that the songs you requested was JUST posted, and people don't want to repost it right away.

What can you do about it? Wait a week and post your requests again.

It takes time for people to rip/encode and upload songs; give them a chance to get to you. There are a lot of people requesting songs all the time. Don't forget, beggars can't be choosers.

You can also use an MP3 search engine. If your request is a popular song, it's pretty likely that somebody has already made an MP3 out of it, and it may be readily available via the World Wide Web. See Sections [2.0] and [7] in this FAQ

[2.6] I know how to make my requests now, but I can't find alt.binaries.sounds.mp3.requests. How am I supposed to post to the "requests" group if it doesn't exist?

It does exist, but maybe your news server doesn't carry it. First thing to do is to confirm that you can't access it through your ISP.

[2.7] How can I confirm that my news server carries the "requests" group?

The first thing to do is make sure you have an updated list of all the newsgroups that your server provides. If you're using Agent, this is accomplished by going to Online|Refresh Groups List -or- Online|Get New Groups

After you have successfully retrieved all of the groups that your server carries, do a search for "alt.binaries.sounds.mp3.requests" (not including the quotes). If you find it, then subscribe to it, pull headers, and you're good to go.

[2.8] The requests group isn't on my news server! I TOLD you that it doesn't exist! Now what do I do?

Okay, maybe it doesn't exist on your news server. Have you tried getting your ISP/news server to carry it? Send a polite e-mail to them explaining that in your effort to respect Usenet etiquette, you feel that the requests group (alt.binaries.sounds.mp3.requests) should be carried by them. It was properly proposed in alt.config without a single dissenting comment. They already carry the mp3 binary group, and the addition of a non-binary/request group will not substantially affect their news server's performance.

Another option WAS www.deja.com. Google (who bought them) promises web access to Usenet, (including alt.binaries.sounds.mp3.requests?) Unfortunately, although you can post a request there, it will be hard to see someone post a heads up or a comment about a request because Google will hide all posts with x-no-archive=yes in the header (a common practice in absm.*). Be sure to state where you would like responders to post, and then you will have to look there to see if anyone did.

[2.9] How do I access the requests group with Deja or RemarQ?

Alas, RemarQ and Deja are no more. They were purchased by Supernews and Google, and there are no remarQ archives. Google has made Deja archives available, but there is still no free access to Usenet from Google as there was from Deja.com.

[2.10] I'm trying to remain anonymous, but when I signed up, my web service needed to know my e-mail address. If I post a request that way, won't people be able to find my real e-mail address?

This FAQ doesn't cover web-based posting services, but you can always go to one of the other free email services and get a new e-mail address. Try www.hotmail.com, www.operamail.com, or www.yahoo.com.

[2.11] If I get a new e-mail address, people won't recognize my name/nym and I won't get the files I request. Isn't there ANY other way to get the requests group?

Yes, you should try to get your ISP/news server to carry the group.

Send a polite e-mail to them explaining that in your effort to respect Usenet etiquette, you feel that the requests group, alt.binaries.sounds.mp3.requests, should be carried by them. It was properly proposed in alt.config without a single dissenting comment. They already carry the binary group, and the addition of a non-binary/request group will not substantially affect their news server's performance.

[2.12]I made my request and I think it got posted, but with all the spam in the binary group I can't find a thing. I thought I heard about some filter that people are using. What is it?

Some newsreader software will allow you to use filters which can make the newsgroup more readable. A filter commonly being used in these groups filters out any post with fewer than 100 lines IF it does not contain any of the following (0/#), nfo, txt, image, scan, or "0 of". Just remember that filters are not infallible, and if you use them there is the possibility that you'll miss something that you wanted to see.

[2.13]Yadda-yadda-yadda Just give me the spam filter for Agent!

The Agent filter is found at
<http://www.mp3-faq.org/tips/agenttips.html#spam>.

A spam filter for Outlook Express is available on the Outlook Express Sub-FAQ: <http://www.mp3-faq.org/tips/ce5subfaq.html>.

[2.14]Where is this "d" group or "discussion group" that everybody talks about? I can't find it on my news server.

The discussion group is alt.binaries.sounds.mp3.d. If you can't find it, you should refer back to Sections [2.6], [2.7], and [2.9]. The topics and suggestions covered in those sections also apply to the discussion group. If, for some reason, your ISP or news server carries some of the a.b.s.m.* groups but NOT the discussion group, you should contact them and request that they carry it.

[2.15]I thought that all requests were supposed to go into the requests group. If that's true, why are there requests in the discussion group?

There are still some people who don't receive the a.b.s.m.requests group, or who are unaware of its existence. Therefore they continue to post their requests into the discussion group. If you use Agent, you can filter out everything with the word "req" in it (<http://www.mp3-faq.org/tips/agenttips.html#req> and the discussion group becomes much easier to read. Do not use this filter in the binary groups. You won't see responses to requests.

A number of people are refusing to fill requests that are posted in the discussion group in an attempt to encourage the use of the proper group, a.b.s.m.requests. Also, if you *are* filling a request that appears in the discussion group, you can suggest to the requestor that his/her request posts would be better served if they appeared in the correct group.

[2.16]I want help identifying a song. Can I post a snippet to the discussion group or .requests?

Please don't. Post a sample to alt.binaries.test or alt.binaries.misc. Then come to the discussion group and ask people to go listen to it and help you identify it. Make sure you identify your sample post by subject title or Message ID so folks can find it. When you get the name of the song, ask for it in the .requests group as usual. Following these steps will keep binaries out of the text-only discussion and .requests groups.

- [3] MAKING MP3s -

[3.0]I want to give something back to this group. How do I make an MP3?

Making MP3s from scratch involves a couple of steps. The first is acquiring the sound file and the second is encoding the file into MP3 format.

[3.1]How do I get the music from my CD-ROM onto my computer?

The preferred method of making MP3s is to do it from a digital source (CD) and capture it digitally (Digital Audio Extraction: DAE). This process is also known as "ripping".

The first thing is to determine if your CD-ROM supports DAE.

NOTE: Unless you specifically state otherwise, those who download your MP3 will automatically assume that it was digitally extracted from a CD. If your music source is a tape or vinyl record or something OTHER than a CD -OR- your capture process includes the use of a sound card or other non-digital methods, you really should inform people in your Subject line or in the zero-file of your binary post. If you do not do this, people will definitely let you know that you should have.

[3.2]How do I determine if my CD-ROM supports digital audio extraction (DAE)?

Some software packages will test your system for you. If you have Easy CD Creator, go to Tools|System Tests|Audio Extraction and run the test.

You can also check the list at: <http://www.cdrfaq.org/faq05.html>.

[3.3] I know my CD-ROM does DAE, but I'm having strange problems and I can't get it to work right. What do I do?

You may be having compatibility problems with a specific piece of software.

Check: <http://www.cdrfaq.org/faq05.html> to see if there are any software issues with your particular CD-ROM drive.

[3.4] My CD-ROM supports DAE; what do I use to rip audio tracks?

There are many different software choices, and each has its pros and cons. Some will encode as you rip the audio, some work better with SCSI drives, etc. Rippers of choice are EAC, AudioGrabber and CDex; there are many others.

For more information go to: <http://software.mp3.com/software/> and click the links at the left for your operating system or platform. They also highlight only a few, so click the "complete list of..." for a more detailed listing

[3.5] Can I encode an MP3 straight off of the CD?

Yes, if you have MP3 Compressor or MP3 Producer installed, you can copy a track straight to into an MP3 with windac32. Go to the menu 'DAC', then to 'select wave format' and choose Fraunhofer IIS MPEG Layer-3 Codec (professional).

The 'MPEG Encoder' (a.k.a. SoloH encoder) also allows MP3 encoding straight from the CD if you have a SCSI CD-ROM.

AudioGrabber works with either SCSI or IDE CD-ROMs and can use its internal codec or BladeEnc's dll to create MP3s, as well as send command line instructions to an external encoder like MP3Enc31 or L3enc.

MusicMatch Jukebox and other all-in-one rippers/encoders are enjoying more popularity, but some find the quality of their encoders to be inferior to others. MusicMatch Jukebox 4.4 started using a Fraunhofer CODEC which can produce good results when used in HQ mode. You have to trust your own ears. More on this later.

[3.6] I've ripped the audio track but the .wav file is messed up. It seems jittery and has pops or skips. Why?

Just because your CD-ROM is a 24x doesn't mean that it can necessarily rip audio at that speed. Frequently jitter problems are directly related to the speed at which you're ripping audio. Set your software to a slower speed and try again.

Some software packages, such as WinDAC, have a jitter-correction option that may help.

Or you may just be having a software compatibility problem. Some ripping software doesn't work well with certain CD-ROM drives. Try using a different piece of software. For more info on specific drives and software that works with them, go to: <http://www.cdrfaq.org/faq05.html>.

Also, don't forget the Help files that come with your software. Spending some time reading the manual can solve a world of difficulties.

[3.7] I don't like the way the song sounds on the CD because I like more bass. Should I adjust the equalization (EQ) on the .wav file before making it into an MP3 and uploading it?

Please don't. People generally want to hear an MP3 that is as close to the original CD as possible. Even though you may feel that something helpful (like normalizing the songs) will make them better, that decision should be left to the final recipient. If they want to tweak their MP3s, they can do it themselves. If you *have* tweaked or adjusted the song before you encoded it, please make that information known when you post it. See Section [4.9] and [4.10] for more information.

There is also some information at <http://www.digido.com/cdmastering.html> regarding the use of normalization. Normalizing can be useful in specific situations for certain tasks. However, it is NOT recommended that you normalize songs before uploading them into the newsgroups. People are looking for compressed versions of specific pieces of audio, and not for your 'adjusted' version.

[3.8] I've ripped the track to my hard drive. Anything I should do before I turn it into an MP3?

Yes. Listen to all of your files first. Before you encode the file

into an MP3 and possibly upload a problematic MP3, make sure your source file is clean and doesn't have any jitter, skipping, distortion or unwanted noise.

[3.9] I've listened to all my uncompressed files and they sound great, now how do I make them into MP3s?

There are a number of different programs that encode MP3s, and each has different features. There are also different codecs which provide varying results. Some software comes with its own codec, and others require you to already have a codec installed on your computer.

More information on encoding software can be found in Sections [3.10], [3.11] and at <http://www.mp3.com/software/encodersrest.html>

[3.10] I've heard that not all encoders/codecs give equal quality results. Which encoder/codec is best?

There is NO single correct answer to this question. This is the 'Holy Grail' of MP3 creation, but the fact is that there is not one single MP3 encoder that is perfect 100% of the time.

There are certain encoders that are generally considered 'good' and there are encoders that are generally considered 'not-good.' In the end, only trial-and-error will let you know which encoder works the best for any particular song.

Do your own testing. Listen to your MP3s before uploading them. If you hear flanging or 'swooshies,' try an encoder that DOESN'T utilize Joint-Stereo. Joint-Stereo has been a major culprit in creating unacceptable MP3s. See [3.17] for more info on flanging.

There are a couple WWW sites that do encoder comparisons.
<http://kempelen.inf.bme.hu/~dancsi/USE!/> - Has animated encoder comparisons. Also rates encoders based on a number of factors.

<http://www.pcavtech.com/play-rec/summary/index.htm> - Not exclusively an MP3 site, but does compare some encoders. (this site is live, but the page was not functioning when last checked)

NOTE: Some people will rank MP3 encoders based on their speed or extra features (ability to rip and encode, automatic ID3 tags etc.) but in the a.b.s.m.* groups, audio-quality is more important than speed or features. When you hear or read information regarding "the best encoder" you should try to determine what factors are being taken into consideration.

The quest for the 'perfect encoder' seems to be never ending. It seems that certain encoders are better suited for certain types of music and not so much for other types. There is also a subjective aspect that will become quickly obvious as soon as you post your question in a.b.s.m.p3.d. Check out the Encoders page in the Tips section where we will be collecting (subjective) reviews of various encoders: <http://www.mp3-faq.org/tips/encoders.html>.

The bottom line? Use your ears and do some testing. A good set of headphones can give you information that a set of computer speakers won't. And if you don't have the time for that, then ask around in a.b.s.m.d and see what the consensus du jour appears to be, but ALWAYS listen to your MP3s before uploading them.

Check out the Tips section for some brief descriptions of encoders and players.

[3.11] Enough tap dancing around the answer, just tell me WHAT ENCODER IS THE BEST?

Okay, okay, you've come to the FAQ for an answer, so here is an answer. In no particular order, the encoders of choice are Blade, <http://bladeenc.mp3.no/>, an older version of the Fraunhofer codec L3enc version 2.0 (capable of true-stereo encodes) and the newer versions of Fraunhofer IIS MPEG Layer-3 Encoder (v3.1 - external CODEC mp3enc31 and v1.263 - internal CODEC - look for these in alt.binaries.sounds.utilities), and the free MusicMatch Jukebox which uses an excellent Fraunhofer CODEC. Start with these, give others a try, and let your own ears be the judge.

[3.12] What is HQ? Should I use it?

Using the HQ setting means that the encoder determines the best encoding based on *all* parts of the file, while non-HQ determines its "best encoding" by testing part of the file. Not all encoders have an HQ option. But if your encoder does allow for High Quality encoding, you should use it.

[3.13] Winamp tells me that .wav files are 176kbps. Why don't we just encode at THAT bitrate and get .wav quality MP3s?

What Winamp is *really* telling you is that your .wav file is recorded at 178kiloBYTESps and not kilo-bits per second.

This has caused a fair amount of confusion in the past. When you

digitally extract a stereo song from a CD, there are 176,400 BYTES for each second of music. That's 176.4 kBYTES per second. Noting the fact that there are 8 BITS in each BYTE, you arrive at a BITRate of 1,411,200 bits a second, or approximately 1411kbps. Remember how a 128kbps mp3 should be 1/12th the size of the original .wav? Well 1/11th of 1411kbps is ~128kbps.

[3.14]Should mono material get encoded at the same bitrate as stereo material?

No. Mono originals only require HALF of the bitrate of a stereo recording to get the same quality. If you encode your Stereo MP3s at 128kbps, then the comparable Mono file would only need 64kbps.

For material with little high frequency content and waves with a 22050 sample rate, 64k is recommended. Some spoken word material with no special background effects can be recorded at a low bitrate without suffering loss of quality. Experiment with Joint Stereo, Mono, and VBR to get a good encode with a small resulting file size. Bottom line: do not waste server space or force long download times by recording at too high a bitrate if the source material does not need it, but do not destroy quality either.

[3.15]Who listens to mono any more? Shouldn't I just encode my mono songs in stereo?

No. If the original recording was in MONO, it should stay that way.

[3.16]What's the Difference between Stereo, Joint-Stereo and Dual-Channel?

Joint-Stereo - This method of encoding combines duplicate (or "perceptually similar") information from the Right and Left channels in an effort to most efficiently compress the file. This way the duplicate information is only encoded *once* instead of twice (one time for each channel) and allows for more bits to be allocated to the other non-duplicate information.

Dual-Channel - Two independent channels. This method keeps the Right and Left channel information completely separate. The downside is that if there is very little information on the Left channel, there is some "waste" of available bits that could be used by a very busy Right channel.

Stereo - Stereo does *not* combine similar information in the manner of Joint-Stereo, but it *does* use available or "leftover" bits from one channel to store information from the other channel if necessary. So it provides a compromise of the previous methods. Separate Right and Left Channels along with a somewhat efficient usage of the available bits.

No matter which type of encoding you use, please remember to listen to your files before uploading them.

[3.17]I've made some MP3s with Joint-Stereo and I think they sound fine, but I'm not sure my \$20 computer speakers are very accurate. Is there a better way to tell if my Joint-Stereo MP3s are flanging?

One way is to enable your soundcard's '3D Enhanced Stereo' option if your soundcard has it. This will frequently cause any flanging to become VERY noticeable. If you can hear the 'swooshies' or other artifacting, try a different encoder or encoding your MP3s in Stereo instead of Joint-Stereo. Visit <http://www.harmony-central.com/Effects/Articles/Flanging/> for a sample of what flanging sounds like.

[3.18]My MP3s sound good except there is a little POP at the very beginning of the song. What can I do about that?

First of all listen to the file a couple times. Sometimes your MP3 player will make a sound that isn't necessarily in your MP3. If the pop *is* there, then you have a couple options for removing it.

One option was suggested by the author of SoloH and requires a Hex-Editor. What you do is open up the MP3 file into a hex editor and remove the first frame of the file. This is approximately 418 bytes of information and runs from the first FFFB to the next FFFB. This can be done more than once if more than one frame needs to be removed.

Still another software option is a program called MP3Trim. It allows you to trim your MP3 from the beginning or the end in increments of approximately 3/100ths of a second. MP3Trim is available at: www.logiccell.com/~mp3trim/

[3.19]What is VBR? What is Audio Catalyst? Should I be using them?

VBR stands for Variable Bit Rate. VBR means that every frame of an MP3 doesn't have to be encoded at the same bitrate. Using VBR encoding in MP3s allow for certain frames to be encoded at a higher bitrate than the surrounding frames. The concept is great because it can keep the overall file size low while allocating extra space for parts of a song that might need the extra bits, or at least this

is the theory. The reality is that VBR encodes are often larger than a constant bit rate (CBR) encode at 128 kps. At the time of this FAQ revision there a few encoders that have implemented VBR: Xing's AudioCatalyst, MusicMatch Jukebox, Real Jukebox, etc. The feelings about VBR encoded songs are varied and extreme. Some people like them and others don't.

NOTE: Not all MP3 Players support VBR encoded files. If you use VBR to encode your files, make sure you specify "VBR" in your Subject header.

The bottom-line with VBR? YMMV (Your mileage may vary).

[3.20]My CD-ROM doesn't do DAE but I can sample the audio via my sound card. Should I do that?

The general consensus is "no" due to the amount of noise that gets introduced into the file by that process. You may not initially even hear the noise due to your computer fan, the quality of your speakers, etc., but inexpensive sound cards, in conjunction with your computer itself, introduce noise into the files. However, if it's something that's unavailable anywhere else, or the requestor doesn't mind, then just make sure you make a note of the ripping technique in the Subject Line of your post.

[3.21]I don't have a CD-ROM in my computer, but I do have a CD player in my stereo; can I just hook that up to my sound card and sample it that way?

Non DAE MP3s are generally discouraged, but it is possible to do it with your equipment. You'll want to connect the aux-out or line-out of your CD-player to the line-in of your sound card. If you're sampling a stereo source, make sure you're using a stereo cable. Before sampling the song, you'll want to check the levels so you don't create a file with a lot of distortion. You may have software that came with your sound card that will allow you to do this; Creative Labs SoundO'LE wave recorder is one example.

You also want to be sure you're using the line inputs and not the microphone inputs. The impedance is different, and if you use the mic inputs, your files will very likely be distorted. It is possible to create files using the mic-inputs, but no matter which you do use make sure you monitor the sound levels. People don't like distorted MP3s.

There have also been reports of a signal that is too low. If this is the case you may have to add your amplifier into the mix; going from your CD player, to the amp, to the sound card. This of course adds even more noise into the file and will result in a less than optimum mp3. The best signal-to-noise ratio will be achieved if you record the music at a high level, but not so high that it distorts or clips. Don't let the levels go into the red. An application like Cool Edit or Sound Forge will prove to be very helpful during this process.

[3.22]I have some tapes that I want to post as MP3s. How can I do that?

MP3s originating from cassettes are GREATLY discouraged, but it can be done. See the previous Q and A for the setup. Also note that because of the way that tapes stretch slightly the use of Joint-Stereo will often produce low-quality MP3s. Using an encoder with Dual-Channel or Stereo encoding options may greatly improve the quality of your MP3.

[3.23]I made an MP3 from a tape and it sounds TERRIBLE! No, I mean a lot worse than the .wav file did. Why?

Try using Layer-II Mpeg (.mp2) encoding instead of MP3. Apparently this creates a better sound file from certain analog sources. A reminder that this is the FAQ for a.b.s.mp3, a group for the posting of MP3s, not other formats. Also, because of the way that tapes stretch slightly through use, using Joint-Stereo will often produce low-quality MP3s. Using an encoder with Dual-Channel or Stereo encoding options may greatly improve the quality of your MP3.

For an excellent tutorial on recording tapes for conversion to MP3, please see the Tips section on Cassette Techniques:
<http://www.mp3-faq.org/tips/capcass.htm>.

[3.24]I'm making some MP3s from a vinyl source. Is there any easy way to make my files sound better?

Easy way? No. When making MP3s from vinyl sources even more time and effort are usually required to get the best sounding MP3 possible. There are some posters who do a fantastic job at making MP3s from vinyl sources, and they take their time and make sure they're done right before posting their files.

There are some 'de-hissing' 'de-clicking' pieces of software, but you should still double and triple check your .wavs before encoding them. Some of the software works better than others, and really the only way to be sure that all of the pops and crackles are taken care of is to do it manually. By using a program like Sound Forge

(<http://www.soundforge.com/>), or other .wav editing programs, you can look at the actual waveform and locate the pops and clicks. From there you can manually 'edit' them out.

The general consensus on making good MP3s out of your vinyl comes down to this:

It all starts with your hardware. The better the hardware, the better the resulting .wav. A good turntable, cartridge, sound card and pre-amp will ALL boost your quality by leaps and bounds. There was even a suggestion to play your worn vinyl wet.

When it comes to software any good .wav editing program will do to capture the .wav. DartPro (www.tracertek.com), Clean (www.steinberg.net), or CoolEdit (www.syntrillium.com) should do a fine job. One thing you have to do is take some time setting your recording level though. If it's too high you'll end up clipping, and if it's too low the noise level will be too loud. Take your time and find the level that's "just right".

When it comes to cleaning up your .wav the key is to take it easy on noise-reduction. More is not necessarily better, and if used too emphatically it can really destroy any good sound in your .wav. DartPro has some nice options like its ability to take a "noiseprint" of an unwanted noise and remove it throughout your recording. And one nice thing about Steinberg's Clean is that it will let you play the .wav file though the noise reduction *before* you commit to it. That way you can see if the de-hissing/sound quality trade off is worth it. Listen to your files through a good set of headphones.

If it's your first time, post one or two songs in `alt.binaries.test`. Then post a heads-up in `alt.binaries.sounds.mp3.d` to ask what people think of your files. You should be able to get some good feedback that might help you with your MP3 creation. For more information and tips on transferring your LPs to your hard drive, see the LP to CDR page at: <http://www.delback.co.uk/lp-cdr.htm>. See also the tips section.

[3.25] Can I edit my MP3s directly without having to decode them into .wav files first?

Yes, to a certain extent, you can. There are some programs that will allow you to cut, paste, and otherwise manipulate the MP3 files directly. Some of these are:

MP3Cutter - Available from <http://home.hccnet.nl/p.luijter/> lets you chop and paste MP3 files without first converting them to .wav (which would result in a loss of quality).

MP3Trim, available at: <http://www.logiccell.com/~mp3trim/> allows you to trim the beginning or end of your MP3.

Also, Cool Edit and Cool Edit Pro from www.syntrillium.com will allow you to edit MP3s with the use of a plug-in; however, it will save it as a .wav unless you have a compatible encoding codec installed. You would still be doing the equivalent of extracting to .wav, editing and re-encoding the extracted wav, and the quality of your MP3 may well suffer.

[3.26] I've made my MP3s and it's time to name them. Is there a naming standard? What information should I include in the name?

There is a saying that one man's garbage is another man's treasure. Even though most people would like there to be a naming convention, there are far too many different versions of what is the best. The general consensus is that the full title of the song and the name of the artist should be included. A number of people would also like the album title, some want the track number, and others want the year and the genre of music.

Also keep in mind that non-Windows platforms, especially Mac, do not have the same long filename features that Windows users are accustomed to. You may find sorting the newsgroup by Author a good way to keep files posted by Mac users in more organized fashion.

There is no right answer, but LEAST put the band name and the title of the song in the name of the file. And USE MP3 ID3 TAGS. That way everybody has all of the information necessary to rename their MP3s as they wish. See Section [3.28] for more info on ID3 Tags.

[3.27] I don't like the way other people name their MP3s, and now I have a whole directory filled with MP3s that I want to rename. Is there an easy way to do this?

There are a large number of file renaming utilities available. Go to <http://software.mp3.com/software/> and click the links at the left for your operating system or platform. They also highlight only a few, so click the "complete list of..." for a more detailed listing. You can also use the WWW to your advantage and do a search.

[3.28] What are MP3 ID3 tags? Should I bother with them?

Use them, use them, use them! The MP3 format allows for the addition

of certain information within the MP3 file itself. The ID3v1 standard includes info fields for the Title (Song name), Artist, Album, Year, Genre and even a place for Comments. With ID3v1.1 a Track Number field was added. The creator of ID3v1.1 is the author of MP3ext, an ID tagger available at:
<http://www.mutschler.de/mp3ext/>.

ID taggers are a great way to add information to the MP3 without putting it into the actual name of the file. It is highly suggested that you use the tags and insert all of the information for each MP3. Frequently people end up with MP3s that they like, but they know very little about it beyond what the file is named. Some of the files that start in a.b.s.m.* actually travel around the world via FTP sites and WWW pages, and the file names get changed all the time. By using the ID Tags, the name of the Artist, the Song and the Album that it came from, all remain intact no matter what the actual filename is. Make sure this information is accurate! The Cddb, for example, is far from perfect, so do not blindly trust it if your ripper fills in the ID Tags. Check anything questionable. Of special note is the "year" field in the ID Tag. The year should be the year the track was originally released, not the year the song was reissued on CD. This is especially troublesome on re-releases, "Best of...", or compilation CDs. Along these same lines, it is not very useful for all your ID Tags to say that the track is performed by "Various Artists". Make sure your software does not automatically fill in the blanks with useless information.

The bottom line is that the tags help people, and adding them during the MP3 creation process is the easiest time to do it. If you've just ripped a song from a CD, all the relevant information is there at your fingertips. You know what album it came from, who the artist is, and what year the song was recorded.

You can add ID Tags directly with most MP3 players, like Winamp. But there are also a number of utilities to help you easily add the information, and some of the encoder programs will even do it automatically. For more info and software downloads see
<http://www.mp3.com/software/utilities.html>.

Note that mp3ext is free - and good. <http://www.mutschler.de/mp3ext/>.

All kinds of information regarding the ID3 Tag, its history and its future can be found at <http://www.id3.org/> including information about the new ID3v2 'standard' which allows you to include up to 256MB of song lyrics, Cddb information and even pictures.

[3.29]Cool, I've IDed all of my MP3s and I'm ready to post. Is there anything else I should know?

Yeah, a couple things. First of all, please listen to your files. Are there any pops in them? Do they cut off before the song is over? Secondly, see the "Posting MP3 files" section of this FAQ (Section 4: [faq4.html](#)).

- [4] POSTING MP3s -

A quick reference to posting is the best way to begin this discussion. The rest of this page is long and detailed because it needs to be. Please read it all.

Limit your posts to 75 megabytes per 24 hours.

Make good use of your 0/x file and include all pertinent info.

Use meaningful subject headers that are not too long. Avoid using more than 80 characters!

Test post in test groups. Test again after every reinstall.

Post from 472500 to 315000 bytes per segment (7500 to 5000 lines uuencoded/segment) for best propagation.

Crosspost into the appropriate decade and genre group.

Alert the requestor if you are responding to a request.

Wait 5 days before reposting.

Cancel your "oops" if you do mess up.

Cover scans are cool, but a Zip or Rar rarely is, and other non-MP3 binaries are not at all cool.

[4.0]Where should I post my MP3s?

You should post your MP3s to the main MP3 binary group (alt.binaries.sounds.mp3) with a crosspost to the appropriate "decade" group and to the appropriate "genre" group.

Web sites like www.allmusic.com have search engines that can help

you determine the year when the song was originally recorded.

NOTE: If you don't know when the song was recorded and you can't/don't want to find out, you should err on the side of caution and avoid posting it in any of the decade groups. Please DO NOT post your MP3 into any random decade; a song recorded in 1994 is OFF-TOPIC in the 1970's newsgroup.

Also note that you should post into the decade that the song was originally released. If the song originally came out in the 1970s, but was re-released (unaltered by the original artist) in 1998, the 1970s decade is correct, not 1990s. If you are posting compilations or "best of" albums that span decades, don't crosspost to a decade group. Stick with the main group and the appropriate genre group.

Also, the "genre" groups are by far the *least* propagated groups. If you crosspost to them, you allow some people to more easily find songs from a particular group or genre, but if you chose to ONLY post to those groups *without* crossposting to the main and decade groups, you are automatically eliminating the majority of possible downloaders.

Please post ALL MP3s to the main group. Do not post into the "genre" groups WITHOUT a crosspost to the main and "decade" groups.

[4.1]What are the "decade" groups?

The decade groups are:
alt.binaries.sounds.mp3.1950s
alt.binaries.sounds.mp3.1960s
alt.binaries.sounds.mp3.1970s
alt.binaries.sounds.mp3.1980s
alt.binaries.sounds.mp3.1990s
alt.binaries.sounds.mp3.2000s

[4.2]What about the "other" decade groups?

There were some groups created with an improper hierarchy format. They don't exist on most servers and, even where they do exist, they get little or no MP3 traffic.

[4.3]What are the "genre" groups?

Some of the genre groups are, but are not limited to:

alt.binaries.sounds.mp3.beatles
alt.binaries.sounds.mp3.bootlegs
alt.binaries.sounds.mp3.blues
alt.binaries.sounds.mp3.brazilian
alt.binaries.sounds.mp3.christian
alt.binaries.sounds.mp3.comedy
alt.binaries.sounds.mp3.country
alt.binaries.sounds.mp3.dance
alt.binaries.sounds.mp3.french
alt.binaries.sounds.mp3.heavy-metal
alt.binaries.sounds.mp3.jazz
alt.binaries.sounds.mp3.latin
alt.binaries.sounds.mp3.zappa

There are currently more than 100 groups in the a.b.s.m.* hierarchy and unfortunately more are created all the time. Most of the groups are unavailable on most ISPs. For more information on the groups, see Section [1]

[4.4]Why should I crosspost the files? Doesn't that eat up bandwidth and disk space?

No, crossposting does not eat up bandwidth or disk space. Crossposting DOES NOT mean making your post TWICE. It means that you include both newsgroups in the "Newsgroups:" header of your post. Each news server will only carry one copy of your post, but it will provide two separate "pointers" to that file.

[4.5]HOW do I crosspost?

When crossposting the format is:
first.news.group,second.news.group

There is NO space between the group names and the comma. There are some news servers that won't accept a crosspost if you include spaces. If you're having trouble crossposting with Peck's Power Post or Agent, this may be the problem.

[4.6]My news server doesn't carry certain groups, so I can't crosspost to them. Can I?

You probably can. When you crosspost, the information in your "newsgroups" header propagates to the other servers along with your post. As long as your server carries at least ONE of the groups listed in the header, and you make that valid group the first in your newsgroups listing, it should accept your post and propagate it (and all of the header information) on to other servers. If other servers carry those groups, then pointers to your post will appear in all the specified newsgroups.

[4.7] People read both the main group AND the decade groups. Is there a way to avoid seeing the same posts twice?

If you're using Agent (versions .99g or later), this can be solved by going to Group | Default Properties | Crossposts and checking the box that says, "Enable Crosspost Checking"

Now when you pull headers in all six groups, you will see only one occurrence of each message.

[4.8] Don't some ISPs cancel your message if it's crossposted?

Certain ISPs may have filters set up to disregard messages crossposted to five or more groups. However, crossposting is a generally acceptable activity if it is warranted, and in this case it is only to 2 or 3 groups. ISPs have typically accepted posts made to no more than three groups.

However:

Certain ISPs may have filters set up to disregard messages crossposted to five or more groups or to groups not carried on their news server. Crossposting is a generally acceptable activity if done sensibly and to no more than 2 or 3 groups. Please be aware that as of this writing, two commercial news servers are not accepting / propagating posts made to alt.binaries.sounds.mp3.complete_cd. You risk having your post not being seen by anyone using these providers if you crosspost to absm.complete_cd.

[4.9] What should I put in the subject header of my post?

You should include the name of the song, the artist, and the bitrate it was encoded at. If you're filling a request, include the requestor's name in the subject, preceded with an "ATTN:", to help that person locate the post.

NOTE: Keep in mind that some newsreader software, like Forte's Agent, adds the name of the file to the end of the subject line. If the name of the MP3 file already *includes* the name of the song and the artist, there is no reason to type them in manually as this information will be added automatically.

REMEMBER: If you include every possible suggestion in this paragraph, your subject could end up looking like a paragraph. Whatever you put in the subject header, keep the total length around 70 characters or some people will not be able to read it all.

If you have done anything that would be considered unconventional, you might want to include that in the subject header, and you definitely want to mention it in the 0-file [4.10].

Did the file originate on tape? Put that information in the Subject line. Was it sampled at a low bitrate? Let people know. Was it encoded using VBR? Tell people that fact. If you don't make people aware of these things *before* they download your files, they may become angry. The minor insertion of the word "Vinyl", "Tape" or "VBR" in the subject header can make all the difference in the world.

Some songs have been recorded by many different artists, or even many times by the original artist. If you are posting a version that you *know* is not the original, you should make note of that in the subject header too. There are many people who are only interested in the original-artist/original-recording of a song. The addition of the words "Re-Recording" in the header will alert those who are only interested in original recordings.

Like the MP3 naming convention difficulties, there are many opinions of what should and shouldn't be included in subject headers. The suggestions here are to prevent people from downloading something that they did not expect. Don't forget that there are many people who are still using 28.8 modems and downloading multiple MP3 files is a time consuming process for them.

NOTE: The use of fractions in your Subject header can cause problems with some newsreaders. Putting any kind of numbers in brackets [], braces { }, and parentheses () results in havoc for some newsreaders (they can't reassemble the parts). Let your newsreader only put numbers and dividers in your subject line. For example: if you put "Here are Ten Cool Songs (1/10)" (mean cool song #1 of 10 cool songs) into your Subject line, the (1/10) will likely cause problems, especially after your newsreader appends your Subject with "CoolSong1.mp3 (1/7)". Most newsreaders would never be able to read a subject like Here are Ten Cool Songs (1/10) - CoolSong1.mp3 (1/7).

Using fancy high ASCII and odd characters in your subject line can also cause problems. There are some newsreaders that simply won't see your posts.

Please be aware of the length of your subject headers and try to keep them under 70 characters. As you type your Subject header, try to abbreviate things. "128" conveys just about as much information

as "This was encoded at 128kbps" does.

It's really not difficult to keep your Subject header manageable while still getting the important information across. Here is an example of a *very* informative Subject header that uses only 55 characters:

Example:

[Metal]ATTN: c.y.a. Tape-128S DeathTrolls - Bang You All To Hell.mp3

The accompanying zero-file would let everybody know that the song came off of the soundtrack to Bill and Ted's Bogus Journey, that it was track #8 and that the encoder used was SoloH in true Stereo.

The "S" after 128 indicates that it was encoded in stereo, and [Metal] indicates the genre. While these two things don't *have* to be in the Subject header, this example shows how they *can* be included and *still* result in a Subject that is under 70 characters.

[4.10]What about the zero-file (0/x)?

A zero-file is a simple text entry in the body of your post to which the binary then gets attached. Most newsreaders will create it if you simply compose a text post and then include the binary as an attachment. The zero-file will then be part zero of the total number of parts and the first part of the binary will be part one, etc. The zero-file should contain ANY and ALL pertinent information about the post. You should include information about how the files were created, what software was used, what album the song was taken from and possibly a full track listing (if it's a full CD rip.) You might also want to mention other files you could post and any requests that you might have. In the zero-file, the more information you give, the better.

If you're using Outlook Express, see the Outlook Express Sub-FAQ for more information. If your newsreader does not automatically create a zero-file, see your software's help file.

A common practice in other hierarchies that is often used in the absm.* hierarchy is to include an .nfo file to describe the post rather than or in addition to a zero- file. An .nfo file is just a .txt file that has been given an .nfo extension to denote that it contains information about the posting. Open an .nfo file with any text editor. If you use Windows and know how, you can associate the .nfo extension with your favorite editor. At least one newsreader makes it hard for you to read the 0/x file, so those who use it would prefer .nfo. Some servers are configured to strip .txt files out of binary groups, so making the extension .nfo is a good idea.

[4.11]When I'm filling requests I found in the .requests group, how should I alert the requestor?

PLEASE post a follow-up to the request WITHOUT changing the Subject header. If you add anything to the Subject header like "I'm posting your song NOW", your follow-up post won't necessarily be seen by the requestor because the subject change will start a new thread, not just show up as a follow-up to the requestor's original thread. The a.b.s.m.requests group gets even more posts than the discussion group, so it's very easy to overlook a single post in there.

By posting a follow-up post informing the requestor that you are filling their request, you not only let that person know that they should keep an eye out for the post, but you also let OTHER people know that they shouldn't bother trying to fill the request themselves.

So when you're filling a request, please post a follow-up message to the original request. In the BODY of that follow-up, inform the person that you are going to fill the request, and in which group(s) they can expect to find your post.

[4.12]Some of my files aren't appearing on some other news servers. Why is that?

There are a number of things that could cause this. Short of getting a new ISP or complaining to your present ISP about poor propagation, you can't do anything about most of the problems, but one thing that has seemed to improve propagation is adjusting your segment size. See Section [4.13]

[4.13]How many lines per segment should I use when I post?

Try setting your segment size to something between 460K and 300K (between 7500 and 5000 lines uuencoded). The higher setting is usually fine, but if downloaders are consistently complaining about your posts being incomplete, reduce your segment sizes a bit more.

These settings are for uuencoding *only*, not for yEnc. Consult your documentation for segment size setting with yEnc posting clients.

Don't use a setting below 300K. It will create far too many headers which puts a strain on news servers. If your ISP kills

binaries larger than 300K, it means they don't want large binaries on their server, so you should subscribe to a pay news service. You should not put a strain on all other servers by trying to propagate a binary that your ISP is trying to prevent.

Instructions on setting segment size in Agent are found here now.

If you're using Outlook Express, see the Outlook Express Sub-FAQ for instructions.

[4.14]How do I post multiple MP3s at once?

By making multiple posts. Do **not** attach multiple files to **one** single post. If you post like this, you can easily end up with a single post that has over 100 parts, and it makes it difficult for anybody to retrieve a single MP3 from your post without downloading the ENTIRE post. A post that won't be downloaded is a waste of server space.

[4.15]I noticed that people are following up my MP3 posts with questions/salutations/requests/etc. in the binary group. I thought the binary group was only for binaries. Is there anything I can do to discourage this?

One thing that you should do is to set your "follow-up" header to point back to alt.binaries.sounds.mp3.d. A lot of the time, the people are merely trying to "Follow-up Usenet Message" and ending up with a non-binary post in the binary group. If you change your follow-up header to the discussion group, the discussion is easily re-routed to the proper forum.

With Agent, this is accomplished by going to Group | Properties | Post and typing alt.binaries.sounds.mp3.d into the "Followup-To:" field.

You can also make a note in your zero-file (0/x) to post any questions in the discussion group with a subject header including: "ATTN:<Your Name>."

[4.16]Should I answer the questions posted to me in the binary group?

That is something that you must decide for yourself. But, if you're interested in keeping the binary groups clean and manageable, you might avoid posting non-binaries there yourself.

If you encourage posting discussions in the discussion group, and **discourage** discussions in the binary group, you're helping to keep these groups clean and organized.

[4.17]I'm trying to post, but my server keeps timing out or I get disconnected in the middle of my post. Is there any way to resume my post in the middle or do I have to start over?

There are some software packages that will allow you to resume your post if you use a PC compatible. Microsoft's Outlook Express will do this. And for those who use a newsreader that doesn't let you resume a binary post, there are two programs that will be of great help. One is the venerable Peck's Power Post. The other is Power-Post 2000 by Chris Morse, a program that has become very popular in a very short period of time. You can download Peck's (and Power-Post and other programs) at our downloads page. For Peck's download the file called PPP06b.zip. Power-Post 2000 is found at <http://www.cosmicwolf.com>. If you have problems accessing this site, we are providing a mirror at the site above that offers Peck's with Chris' permission. Download three files to get Power-Post 2000: PowerPost_v13b25.zip (the version number will change as it is updated). If it doesn't work you need to download two support files - mfc42.zip and 401comupd.exe (these are updated .dlls for your system).

[4.18]Darn it, I had to restart my MP3 upload 5 times last night and now there are all kinds of little pieces cluttering up the newsgroup. Is there anything that I can do to clean it up?

Yes. Cancel your unfinished posts. Most newsreaders will allow you to easily cancel your own posts. Read the help file. The unusable pieces of your post do nothing but consume space on the news server and you should cancel them. For more on canceling posts see Section [4.19] [4.20] and [4.21].

[4.19]Whoops! I posted an MP3 to the discussion/requests group. What should I do?

You should not only post a brief apology to the discussion group, but you should also cancel the post. Most newsreaders will allow you to easily cancel your own posts. Read the help file. Clean up your mess and free up the server space. Most news servers allocate different amounts of space for the binary groups than they do for the non-binary groups, so stop hogging all of the non-binary space with your misplaced binary.

Don't forget that most MP3s will be broken into multiple parts by your newsreader. This means that there is not just **one** post to

cancel, but *many*. Although your binary may appear to be one file, you may need to split it into all of its separate parts to cancel it all.

If you are using Forte's Agent or Free Agent newsreaders, you should read the detailed instructions in the Tips section on canceling.

If you're using Outlook Express, check out the Outlook Express Sub-FAQ.

For other newsreaders, check out the Cancel FAQ at <http://www.killfile.org/~tskirvin/faqs/cancel.html>

[4.20]Why is everybody yelling at me? I *can't* cancel my misplaced/incomplete posts because my news server doesn't accept cancel messages.

People are yelling at you because you *can* (and should) still cancel your posts. It doesn't matter whether your server will cancel the messages or not. Even if the messages aren't cancelled on your server, you can cancel them on all the other servers by issuing your cancel. Not all servers honor cancels, but all accept and propagate cancels. For more information on how to cancel see Section [4.19].

[4.21]I didn't realize that my posts had screwed up while I was asleep. Is it too late for me to cancel them?

No. It's never too late. Anything you can do to clean up your mess is appreciated. Better late than never. For more information on how to cancel see Section [4.19]

[4.22]Somebody posted the same file that I posted; should I cancel their post?

NO! NO-NO-NO! You should NEVER cancel someone else's post. It is a severe breach of netiquette and will often result in your ISP canceling your service. NEVER CANCEL ANYBODY'S POSTS BUT YOUR OWN!

[4.23]I'm posting my MP3s. Should I make an announcement to a.b.s.m.d?

Maybe. If you are filling a request, you should alert the person who requested it by posting a follow-up to the request stating that you are going to upload the requested file (see Section [4.11]), but this should be done in the requests group.

If you are planning on doing a post that you know will be of interest to a certain number of people who follow a.b.s.m.d, you might want to make an announcement before you post. This will give people a chance to prepare for downloading multiple songs.

[4.24]I know that the other large binary groups have a daily posting limit or cap. Is there any limit to how many files I should post in one day?

Yes there is a daily posting cap. Please don't post everything you have all at once just because you can.
* * no more than 75 megabytes of files within any 24 hour period * *

This means that in any 24-hours, no single poster's account should upload more than 75 megabytes worth of files into any and all of the alt.binaries.sounds.mp3.* groups. That is not a cap on posting to any one group, that is a cap on the total amount posted daily to any and all of the alt.binaries.sounds.mp3 groups.

The posting limit is not an attempt to restrict *what* is being posted, only *how much*. Flooding the groups pushes other posts off servers. Don't flood these groups.

Why is there a 75 MB posting cap here?

To help ensure that the widest variety of music is available to the largest number of people for the longest period of time.

How does the 75 MB cap help achieve this goal?

It is the considerate thing to do. It takes into consideration both the medium and the people who use it. The cap is there for several reasons:

- a) a cap slows the ever-increasing burden that the binary groups put on servers world wide;
- b) it is an amount that a person on dialup (or someone on a server with crappy retention) can download before it all starts to expire,
- c) that is the limit the members of this hierarchy voted to adopt, about one CD per day at 160 kps, maybe even at 192 kps;
- d) there is just no hurry.

Even with the 75 MB cap, the alt.binaries.sounds.mp3.* hierarchy

(absm.*) is the largest hierarchy by volume. With more and more ISPs dropping the binary groups, self-restraint should be applied to keep even more ISPs from dropping these groups. It is our best hope for keeping the MP3 groups alive on as many providers for as long as possible.

Can I post 75 MB before midnight and then another 75 MB right after midnight? Can I post 75 MB in one group and then 75 MB in another?

No to both. Let's be specific. The cap means:

* * no more than 75meg worth of files within any 24 hour period * *

This means that in any 24-hours, no single account should upload more than 75 megabytes worth of files into the alt.binaries.sounds.mp3.* groups. That is not a cap on posting to any one group, that is a cap on the total amount posted daily to any and all of the alt.binaries.sounds.mp3 groups. When you get ready to post your MP3s, put them in a directory or folder all by themselves and look at the total amount in that directory. If it exceeds 75 MB, just create another subdirectory called Day2 or somesuch. Post over two days. Very simple to keep track of.

Are you saying that posting too much is what is wrong with retention?

Yes. Keep in mind how Usenet works. It is very different from Napster. Providers configure their news servers with a fixed amount of space for text and for binaries. This storage is always full. Different providers apportion this space different ways, but everyone has some storage limit. When posts no longer fit on the drives, the oldest stuff expires. First in, first out (FIFO). The more that gets posted, the faster the material expires. The posts simply disappear, whether you got around to downloading them or not. Retention is measured in hours on some ISPs, and that s bad.

(NOTE: One extremely bad situation is created when someone posts binaries to a text group. A large binary will push the equivalent of a large binary off the binary spool, but a binary in a text group scrolls *thousands* of text posts off servers. Be very careful not to crosspost requests between text and binary groups or respond to such requests. That's a primary way accidents happen.)

Why don t ISPs just get better feeds and servers or buy more drives?

Adding hard drive space and news feeds is incredibly expensive. Some providers are finding it more economically feasible to just drop the groups rather than to try to keep up with the flood tide. You may think that, because consumer hard drive costs are so cheap now, that adding drive space is a simple way to keep up, but it is simply not true on Usenet. Even ISPs that have gone out and spent a million dollars or more on new equipment now find that their retention is right back where it started because of the ever-increasing amount of material posted. These ISPs can t justify going out and spending another million on a service that a minority of their customers use and they don t even charge extra for.

Why not just sign up for a pay service?

Why? Retention was good until broadband posters started dumping hundreds of megabytes onto the servers without consideration for the medium or one s fellow users. Usenet was never really designed to post binaries. It works, but very inefficiently, and the hardware and software both suffer greatly from too much of a load. The encoding of a binary to store it on Usenet adds 40%, so 75 MB of unencoded MP3s is much larger on your newsserver's drives. Even the pay services are having trouble keeping up. Pay service retention is trending downward, and increased costs are causing their prices to spiral upward.

But what if I'm just filling requests?

Even when filling requests. Just because you're filling requests, you need to abide by the posting cap. 75 megabytes of requested songs occupy the exact same amount of server space that 75 megabytes of NON-requested songs.

But people think I m great when I m posting a lot. What's wrong with that?

Even more people will be unhappy if you flood. Respect on Usenet is not measured or earned by flaunting the size of your music collection or your number of posts. Your posts are no more important than anyone else's. Flooding pushes other material off the server that people are trying to get. If you post way over the cap your ISP may receive complaints. Nobody needs that. Being in too much a hurry is just not worth it. Usenet is a one-to-many medium. It is not the right place to trade files with some other single user. Use FTP or peer-to-peer (Napster replacements), not Usenet, for that.

The posting limit is not an attempt to restrict *what* is being posted, just how much. If you spread your posts out (especially with a full CD), even people with limited online time, slow modems or short-retention news servers will be able to download most of the